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SUBJECT: ISRAELI FM LIBERMAN VISITS DENMARK

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¶1. (SBU) SUMMARY: Israeli Foreign Minister Liberman visited Copenhagen November 9-10, but failed to get Denmark's support for upgrading Israel's relations with the EU. Foreign Minister Per Stig Moeller and members of the Folketing expressed publicly opposition to Lieberman's objective of asking Denmark to support upgrading the EU's cooperation with Israel. At a small dinner attended by Ambassador Fulton, Liberman stated "we favor a two-state solution" and "as a settler, I am willing to evacuate if we can get a correct deal." END SUMMARY.

¶2. (U) Israeli FM Avigdor Liberman's November 9-10 visit to Copenhagen did not produce the support he sought from Denmark for upgrading Israel's relations with the EU:

- FM Moeller stated publicly that the situation in the Mideast had not "changed in a way that would currently allow for an action plan from the EU." Moeller added that he hoped "circumstances might soon change and allow an upgrade in cooperation. If this doesn't happen before the end of 2009, it's my expectation that the EU will move to extend the existing action plan."

- The foreign policy spokesman of the largest party in Denmark's ruling coalition, Soeren Pind, said "settlements are complicating" Israel's negotiations for enhanced relations with the EU. "In an attempt to advance the peace process the U.S. has issued a number of demands to Israel in regards to settlements, and here the EU and U.S. have common interests. So it's difficult to meet Israel's desire. And that's coming from a friend of Israel."

- The foreign policy spokesman of Denmark's top opposition party SDP, Jeppe Kofod, said his party had "three crystal clear" conditions for upgrading Israel-EU cooperation: "Settlements must be stopped. The blockade of Gaza must be lifted, and accusations of Israeli war crimes during the Gaza war, and also crimes committed by Hamas (sic), must be investigated and prosecuted."

¶3. (SBU) The Danish People's Party, whose support from outside the government is indispensable to the ruling coalition, was much more positive towards Israel. Foreign policy spokesman Soeren Espersen said "it's simply unacceptable that Denmark doesn't support Israel, the only democracy in the Middle East. I think that the Danish Government should take steps within the EU to normalize relations with the EU, instead of supporting the other regimes in the Middle East." On settlements, Espersen said "No one knows where the borders are. We'll only know that after a final peace settlement,

and so Israel's settlements in the so-called Palestinian Territories cannot be used to punish Israel."

¶4. (SBU) Israel's Ambassador to Denmark, Arthur Avnon, hosted a small dinner party for FM Liberman November 9, to which only two foreign diplomats were invited, the Swedish and US Ambassadors to Denmark. Prior to his formal remarks, Ambassador Fulton asked Liberman for his thoughts on what would happen if Palestinian Authority Chairman Mahmoud Abbas carried out his threat not to seek re-election. Liberman called Abbas' announcement a tactic: Abbas needed to show he is tougher than Hamas, and he is angling for some concession from Israel.

¶5. (SBU) Highlights of Liberman's remarks to the dinner company (in good but not excellent English):

- We must begin again the peace process. Beginning is important. It is a process - but it needs to begin.

- "We favor a two state solution." Liberman said that it is ironic that the Jewish state will create a Palestinian state - even though no Palestinian state has existed historically. "As a settler, I am willing to evacuate (my settlement) if we can get a correct deal."

- The reason there has been no peace achieved in the Middle East since the 2000 Camp David talks is that the conflict is not Israel versus Arabs, but militant Muslims versus others. He pointed to Egypt and the Muslim Brotherhood; Lebanon and Hizbullah; Afghanistan and the Taliban; Pakistan and also the Taliban; Palestine and Hamas and Islamic Jihad. The Arab countries "are on the fence" watching to see who will win - the radical Islamists or the West.

- When we say we must create peace, we mean by peace that it is essential to have security, stability and prosperity. The mid-term

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is more important than the final agreement. "This is an emotional conflict - there are so many emotions." There are many conflicts that have not reached a final agreement (he mentioned the UK and Argentina over the Falklands; Turkey and Greece over Cyprus), yet both sides have learned to live with the situation and to understand to use diplomatic discourse and not weapons.

¶5. (SBU) Liberman then called on his Deputy Danny Ayalon, who was Israel's Ambassador to the US 2002-2006. The Deputy FM made the following points:

- Prime Minister Netanyahu was in Washington, D.C. meeting with President Obama at the same time, calling for him to get the peace process restarted. The US is the only one who can talk to the Palestinians.

- US and Europe are indispensable to continuation of the peace process.

- Israel has supported the Palestinian Authority. Europe is the largest supporter of PA. America supports PA. The Arab countries do not. Saudi Arabia could give billions to PA, but it gives only a small amount, and it also gives to Hamas.

- Some ask about Syria. If there were peace, Syria would lose influence. Syria wants to continue to control Lebanon, which brings lots of revenue to Syria.

- Iran is trying to buy time (while it develops nuclear weapons). The US has to say "enough is enough" to Iran.

FULTON